WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A method of selecting programs from a plurality of programs, comprising:

accessing a first database that includes program information describing

5   the plurality of programs through program attributes;

obtaining user-defined criteria identifying preferred program attributes

and non-preferred program attributes; and

sorting through the first database to determine a program having program

attributes that include the preferred program attributes and exclude the non-

10   preferred program attributes.

2.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising presenting the program to the

user for selection.

3.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising recording the program for

deferred selection by the user.

15   4.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising receiving a user input to

modify the user-defined attributes.

5.   The method of Claim 1, wherein said sorting involves applying a logical

AND and a logical NOT to the program attributes.

6.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the program attributes and the user-

20   defined attributes are selected from a group that includes channel, actor, director, title,

genre, language, critical rating, callsign, play content, maturity rating, multi-part format

and seasonal content.

7.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising repeatedly sorting through

the first database.

25   8.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising updating the program

information of the first database.

9.   The method of Claim 8, further comprising repeatedly sorting through

the first database including updated program information.

10.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the user-defined attributes are obtained

30   from a second database.

11.   The method of Claim 10, wherein the second database stores multiple sets of user-defined attributes for multiple users.

12.   The method of Claim 10, wherein the second database stores multiple sets of user-defined attributes for a user.

5   13.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the user-defined attributes are obtained from an input device under control of the user.

14.   An audio/video apparatus for selecting programs from a plurality of programs, comprising:

a memory to receive and to store program information describing a 10   plurality of programs through program attributes;

a source of user-defined criteria, wherein the user-defined criteria identify preferred program attributes and non-preferred program attributes; and

a preference module configured to sort through the program information to determine a program having program attributes that include the preferred 15   program attributes and exclude the non-preferred program attributes.

15.   The apparatus of Claim 14, further comprising a graphical user interface for presenting the program to a user for selection.

16.   The apparatus of Claim 15, wherein the graphical user interface is configured to receive a user input to modify the user-defined attributes.

20   17.   The apparatus of Claim 15, wherein the graphical user interface is configured to receive a user input to select the program.

18.   The apparatus of Claim 14, further comprising a storage device configured to record the program for deferred selection by a user.

19.   The apparatus of Claim 18, wherein the preference module is configured 25   to initiate automatic recording of the program determined by the preference module.

20.   The apparatus of Claim 18, wherein the preference module is configured to initiate recording of the program upon the user selecting the program determined by the preference module.

21.   The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein the preference module applies a 30   logical AND and a logical NOT to the program attributes.

22.   The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein the user-defined attributes and the program attributes are selected from a group including channel, actor, director, title, genre, language, critical rating, callsign, play content, maturity rating, multi-part format and seasonal content.

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